

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T DACCA 2078

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, BG, IN
SUBJECT: BDG-GOI UNDERSTANDING ON FARAKKA

REFS: (A) DACCA 2052 (B) NEW DELHI 5607

1. FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HUSAIN TOLD ME APRIL 20 THAT BANGLADESH WAS MOST PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE LATEST ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS ON THE FARAKKA DISPUTE. BANGLADESH DID NOT BY ANY MEANS GET EVERYTHING IT WANTED, BUT TABARAK FELT, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THAT THE SETTLEMENT WAS THE BEST THAT COULD BE ACHIEVED. UNDER THE "GENERAL UNDERSTANDING" THAT HAS BEEN REACHED, INDIA WILL RELEASE 34,500 CUSECS OF WATER AT FARAKKA AT THE LOWEST POINT IN THE LEAN SEASON. FLOW AT OTHER TIMES WILL RISE ON A SLIDING SCALE. THIS REPRESENTS A A COMPROMISE FROM BANGLADESH'S EARLIER "ROCK BOTTOM" FIGURE OF 40,000 CUSECS AND INDIA'S LAST OFFER OF A SHADE OVER 30,000. COMMENT: TO US, SPLITTING THE DIFFERENCE IN THIS MANNER SEEMS LIKE AN EQUITABLE ARRANGEMENT. WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THIS COMPROMISE

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WAS WORKED OUT AT THE LAST MINUTE THROUGH ZIA'S PERSONAL INTERVENTION AND THAT ADMIRAL KHAN HELD OUT FOR CONSIDERABLY MORE. END COMMENT.

2. TABARAK HUSAIN SAID SOME DETAILS ARE STILL TO BE WORKED OUT. THESE INCLUDE BILATERAL MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS TO CHECK THE FLOW AT FARAKKA AND ALSO MEASURES

TO ENSURE THAT INDIA DOES NOT MAKE ADDITIONAL OFFTAKES BELOW FARAKKA WITHIN INDIA OR ALONG THE NEARLY ONE HUNDRED MILES THAT THE GANGES FORMS THE BORDER BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY EXPECTS THESE DETAILS TO BE TACKLED WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL IN NEW DELHI AND THE FINAL CAP TO BE PUT ON THE AGREEMENT THERE AT A HIGHER LEVEL. ASKED IF THIS MIGHT BE AT THE SUMMIT, TABARAK SAID HE COULD SAY NOTHING ON THIS AT PRESENT, BUT THAT THSI POSSIBILITY WAS NOT TOTALLY RULED OUT.

3. TABARAK HUSAIN CONFIRMED THAT JAGJIVAN RAM HAD LOST HIS COOL TOWARD THE END OF THE NEGOTIATIONS (PARA 2, REF A). APPARENTLY, HE WAS ALREADY LATE AND RUSHING TO HIS CAR TO LEAVE FOR THE AIRPORT, WITH A CABINET MEETING PENDING IMMEDIATELY UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN NEW DELHI, AND FELT THAT ADMIRAL KHAN WAS SPEAKING TO THE PRESS EXCESSIBELY AND PERHAPS OBFUSCATING THE ISSUE. TABARAK SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE BANGLADESHI SIDE ATTACHED NO PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO THIS AND STILL FOUND JAGJIBAN RAM A REASONABLE MAN WITH WHOM TO DEAL. IN FACT, HE SAID THEY WERE MOST ENCOURAGED BY THEIR INITIAL CONTACTS WITH THE NEW GOI. ASKED WHY A FINAL AGREEMENT COULD NOT BE REACHED HERE IN DACCA, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID HE FELT JAGJIVAN RAM HAD A "LIMITED BRIEF" AND HAD TO TOUCH BASE WITH MORARJI DESAI BEFORE FINAL AGREEMENT WAS CONCLUDED.

4. TABARAK SAID THE BORDER SITUATION WAS ALSO
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DISCUSSED WITH JAGJIVAN RAM AND BETWEEN THE TWO FOREIGN SECRETARIES. THE INDIAN SIDE PLEDGED THAT FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT FOR DISSIDENT ELEMENTS OPERATING ALONG THE BORDER WOULD END. FINAL ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE AT A MEETING TO BE HELD IN NEW DELHI WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE, PROBABLY BY THE HEADS OF THE TWO BORDER SECURITY FORCES.
MASTERS

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